1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
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177 (S. *candil*), the candle, and the alcohol tin (S. *bote*) in
[354 which water is carried and stored. Two of these tins
415 are yoked together and swung over the shoulder. In
482 this device (S. *aguantador*), of course European in
562] character, water is hauled by the men. A woman carries only a single tin.

778 A domestic shrine is found in most houses. This may
352 be no more than a printed or painted picture of a saint, but more commonly it is a carved and painted wooden figure, usually a Virgin or a Christ. This may be only a few inches high, or as much as six feet. Most are from early Colonial times. In front of this figure
782 an incense burner (S. *sahumeria;* N. *popochcomitl*) is
778 placed. This is of black glazed pottery. In it copal
352 gum is burned. Flowers are also placed before the figure, in bottles or vases, and pictures of other saints are hung near the image. This shrine is the center of domestic worship and ritual. Candles are burned before it on feast days; here the infant Christ is "put to bed" on Christmas Eve and taken up on Candlemas; before this image are placed gifts brought on birth-
[527 days or those brought by a boy's parents during the
584] negotiations leading to a marriage with a daughter of the house.

353 Any property not in use is kept on plain wooden shelves or in covered wooden chests. Extra clothing is hung on nails. Walls are frequently decorated with pictures cut from newspapers, with sentimental picture postcards, and with little clay toys and ornamental dishes brought from other villages.

1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
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591 ent. "A good wife lives contentedly with her mother-in-law."[1]

177 585 The ceremonial accompanying marriage has, in general, a simple Catholic form. Most of the features of the old Aztec customs,[2] such as the consultation of diviners in selecting the bride, the formal exhortation of the bride and bridegroom, the tying together of the clothing of the boy and girl as the sanctifying act, have been displaced by Christian-church ritual. But certain elements remain. The formal presentation of the request for the girl's hand, which must be repeated [584] [608] before formally accepted, was a part of the old Indian custom. The godfather has taken the place of the professional *cihuatlanque*. Minor elements of this custom, such as the bringing of gifts of fruit and food, are likewise survivals.[3]

584 [608] When the boy has found a girl he wants to marry, he tells his parents. His father and his mother and his godfather and his godmother all go together to the house of the girl to ask her consent. They are received by the girl and her parents. She is not expected to give her answer then. The representatives of the boy ask the girl and her family to think it over, and they come back in a week. They usually go on Sunday. They may come back more than once. If she says "No," the matter is ended. If she says "Yes," then just a week after her consent is obtained the boy's parents and godparents come to her house and put flowers and candles in front of the *santo* in her house. They do

[183] [1] When it was suggested to one informant that the couple might live with the wife's parents, he laughed and said, "Oh, no, there he couldn't even cry out." But a few newly married couples do live in that way.

[2] See, e.g., Clavijero, *Historia antigua de Mexico*, p. 326.

[3] In some villages the old customs are very largely preserved. See, e.g., J. Paredes Colin, art., "Marriage Customs of San Juan Miautitlan" (Puebla).

1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927) 1930
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this on following Sundays too. They may bring chocolate and wine and a *chiquihuite* of bread and put this before the *santo* also. Usually the boy and girl know the matter is settled before the formal consent is given.

The wedding ceremony is performed by the priest in the church, if the priest is there and if the families can afford it. Civil marriage is required by law and obviates difficulties of inheritance; but it is not well regarded and is done reluctantly and with no feeling of a sanction received. Not uncommonly neither ceremony is performed.[1] After the wedding there is a feast, with *mole poblano* ["turkey *mole*"]. This takes place at the house of the groom. His parents and godparents stand the expense. The girl's wedding costume is likewise paid for by the boy's parents and godparents. The relatives and friends of both families come to the wedding feast; sometimes dancing goes on for two nights.

The marriage is in part a recognition of the new relationship between two families: between the parents and godparents of the bride and those of the groom. All these people are now *compadres*, a very close and intimate relationship characteristic of the peasant peoples of Catholic South Europe. The importance of the godfather, who to a certain extent displaces the father in control over and responsibility for the child, is described by Gamio;[2] the relationship is about the same in Tepoztlán.

The family organization is in general European. The details of family relationships among the Aztecs are unknown. But a comparison of present kinship terms in Tepoztlán with those used by the Aztecs[3]

[1] The collected information does not warrant a statement as to the extent of informal unions without any ceremonial recognition.

[2] *La población del valle de Juan Teotihuacan*, II, 243.

[3] This is done in a table in Appendix A.

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

581 within the last ten years revealed that in fifteen cases the wife was poorer than the husband at the time of marriage, in five cases husband and wife had approximately the same economic status, and in five cases the wife was from a wealthier family than the husband. In each of the five marriages in the last group there was some extenuating factor which explained the fact that a rich girl married a poor boy. Two of the girls were known to have had affairs previous to the marriage; one girl was thirty years old and married a boy of seventeen; one girl was from a small nearby village and married "up" socially, if not economically, into Tepoztlán; and one girl married for love over the objections of her parents.

Parents, in giving their blessings to a marriage, are more concerned with practical considerations of the health of the prospective mate and the family's reputation. [584] The boy's mother and godmother will make inquiries about the girl and will oppose her if she is found to have a reputation for being lazy or disobedient at home, having many *novios*, going out alone, or being sickly. If the women in the girl's [853] family frequently suffer from lack of milk at the birth of a child, she will be considered a bad risk. Mothers are also wary of their son's marrying a girl who is the favorite at home. These factors are of prime importance to the boy's mother since she will be closely associated with her future daughter-in-law. If the mother [584] strongly disapproves of the girl, she will do everything she can to break up the relationship. If the son insists on the marriage, his parents will be obligated to carry out his wishes but will do so grudgingly and will make a poor wedding.

The girl's parents seek a son-in-law who owns or who will inherit some property and who knows how to work hard. They are not so demanding about personal qualities as are his parents, since their son-in-law will, for the most part, not live with them, although they generally disapprove of a man who drinks a great deal or who is *muy enamorado*. A boy who is discovered to be their daughter's *novio* will almost always be strongly disapproved of by the girl's parents, because of their anger over being deceived and because it is taken to be evidence of the boy's lack of respect for them.

582 Marriage restrictions in Tepoztlán follow the usual Catholic tradition of western culture. Marriage between all but distant relatives is forbidden. First and second cousins do not marry, and marriage between third and fourth cousins is dis- [605] couraged. However, relationships beyond second cousins are often not carefully kept track of so that in practice there are many marriages between relatives. There are also marriages between individuals of the same surname. An interesting aspect 582 of marriage restrictions is that children of *compadres* cannot marry each other, for 608 they are "spiritual brothers and sisters." Since the *compadre* terminology is also [601] extended to the sibling of the *compadre*, this marriage restriction also includes their children, and many families are therefore ruled out from those eligible for marriage. There was not a single case of marriage between children of *compadres*.

582 The great majority of Tepoztecans marry within their own village. Of 585 married couples in the village in 1944 only 58 were marriages with outsiders. Of [62] those marrying into the village, 35 were women and 23 were men, reflecting the [591]

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tudes toward sex and sexuality. Most of the attitudes toward sex are negative and prudish and, at least superficially, in accord with Catholic tradition.

Women have a negative attitude toward bearing children. They try to keep the number of pregnancies to a minimum by long nursing and by abstaining from sexual intercourse. Pregnancy is commonly described as "being ill with child," and pregnant women are embarrassed by their condition and make every attempt to conceal it. There is an absence of sexual play between husbands and wives; many women refer to the sex act as "the abuse by the man," and the genitals are generally considered ugly or dirty. There is a widespread belief among adolescent girls that sexual intercourse is painful. Open courtship is not sanctioned, and girls are severely punished for having any relations with boys. The existence of the double standard and the greater personal freedom of boys and men tend to encourage male sexuality. Romantic love, as we conceive it, is practically unknown; romantic attachments are relatively superficial and easily made and broken. Courtship is an intriguing, exciting pastime but it is always cautious, seldom impulsive or passionate.

It cannot be said, however, that Tepoztecans are puritanical, nor are they burdened with feelings of guilt or concepts of sexuality as something sinful.[4] Rather, Tepoztecans place greater value upon sexual restraint than upon sexual activity; just as they do not encourage emotional expressiveness, so do they not encourage active sexuality. Adult sexual activity is discouraged, not so much for reasons of morality but for practical reasons of safety. Parents fear that a young son may make an undesirable attachment with a widow or a dangerous attachment with a married woman, or he may be bewitched by a jealous sweetheart; they fear even more strongly that their daughter will lose her good reputation and the chance of a respectable marriage. Women are generally reluctant to have sexual relations, because of unwanted pregnancies; men discourage sexuality in their wives for fear of being humiliated by the wife's unfaithfulness; wives fear the loss of income and the poor treatment which inevitably attend their husband's extramarital alliances.

While there is much gossip, there is no ostracism or public denouncement or persecution of those who are guilty of sexual indiscretion. The couple living in free union is unmolested, the promiscuous widow maintains her usual relations with neighbors and kin, the illegitimate child is given a similar if not entirely equal position in his mother's household and may receive aid and inheritance

[4] The relative absence of guilt feelings can also be seen in the reactions to stealing and drinking. Drinking is not considered bad in itself, but may be criticized because it takes a man away from his work and takes money which may be sorely needed for other purposes. Stealing is quite frequent and may be severely punished, but it is detection rather than the act itself which is disturbing. In case histories, informants frequently refer to little stealing episodes without any manifestation of remorse or guilt, but emphasize how ashamed they were when discovered. Men do not appear to have guilt in promiscuous sexual relations with women or in deceiving young girls. Rather, they are proud of these feats and consider any conquest to their credit. There is also practically no sense of moral responsibility toward children born out of wedlock.

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familiarity, joking, ridicule, insult, or attack. Although the *Vd.-Vd* relationship also implies equality of status, it is by no means the same psychologically, since both parties extend reciprocal respect.

In the light of the individualism of Tepoztecans, a great deal of competition in inter-personal relations might be supposed. But this is not the case. Tepoztlán is not a competitive society.[7] Accordingly, a lack of strong drive and ambition for self-improvement and a lack of initiative and originality are notable. Most adults tend to be self-satisfied if they have enough food and clothing from harvest to harvest. Among the young people, too, there is a general acceptance of the way of life: young men wish to be farmers as their fathers are, and most young girls continue to work at home and serve their elders. The rewards they seek are not impossible of achievement: occasional new clothes, shoes, a sweetheart, freedom to attend fiestas, and ultimately to marry, with some parental help.

Most married adults find sufficient reward in their growing children, who by their obedience and labor little by little lighten the burden of the parents and give some promise of protection for their parents' old age. (See Fig. 51.) There is almost no pressure upon the parents by the children in the form of demands for material comforts or for independence. Even parents who do not provide minimum necessities for health and comfort, or who are lazy or who drink, do not lose their authoritative position or their right to respect. Few Tepoztecan parents feel inadequate or a failure for not providing well or advancing economically. Insubordination on the part of the children would have a far more shaking effect than chronic poverty upon parental esteem.

There is a relative absence of concern for the future. Only the minority, who recognize education as an important source of security, save in advance for the education of a son or daughter. It is among these families that self-denial in the present, in order to gain future reward, is encountered—a familiar pattern among the urban middle class. The rest of the population exercise general thrift, but it can best be characterized as spending when there is money and pulling in their belts when there is none. The absence of saving "for a rainy day" or for a "nest egg" is striking.

Young people planning marriage do not save in anticipation of their many needs; they marry at short notice, as soon as there is money to pay for the wedding, the money being supplied by the boy's parents from the sale of an animal, by borrowing, or sometimes by the boy's going to work for a few months until the money is raised. Again, when a child is expected, there is no saving in anticipation of its

[7] Though competition occurs in Tepoztlán it is generally between groups rather than between individuals and, for the most part, is limited to social rather than economic activities in which prestige rather than material gain is at stake.

It is interesting to note that in recent years the introduction of certain forms of competition has had disastrous effects. The violence, murder, and bitterness which have grown out of the new competitive enterprise, such as the two bus lines, and the inter-village competition in the communal forest resources for the commercial production of charcoal, suggest that Tepoztecans were quite unprepared for such innovations.

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593 857 [872] [594] [581] home. However, the majority of girls leave school after the third grade, or at eleven years of age. An occasional mother identifies with the daughter and expresses her own ambitions for schooling by allowing the girl to complete the elementary school course.

When a girl is at home, she is at the complete disposal of her mother. The mother is in a position to exploit the daughter and frequently does, especially the eldest daughter. Many girls marry to escape the hard work at home, and some of our case histories reveal the resentment daughters sometimes hold in retrospect toward their mothers. The following was told by a woman forty years of age:

> My mother was a widow. When I was nine we went to Tacubaya because it was the time of the Revolution. My mother borrowed three pesos and made *atole* and *tacos* and sold them. She did well the first year. Then she made meals for 190 factory workers. I made tortillas when I wasn't going to school. I went to school for four years and each morning I got up at 5:00 A.M. and ground corn, and made coffee for my mother, brothers, and sister. I never ate breakfast before school for lack of time. I also made the tortillas for the family for lunch and supper. My mother hired three women and a boy to help her at her work, and she made a lot of money. After four years she took us back to Tepoztlán because she didn't want us to grow up perverse. Then my three older brothers became teamsters and left the house at 4:00 or 5:00 A.M. every day. I had to get up at 1:00 A.M. to grind and make tortillas and *tacos* for them. After they left, I swept the patio and garden and fed the pigs and chickens. Then I made tortillas for my mother, grandmother, and sister. After breakfast I had to grind corn for the two or three pigs we always had and then again for the evening meal. I cut and sewed the clothes, washed and ironed, and did all the work of the house when I was fourteen. I also milked the cows. My mother was always a merchant. Since I was such a hard worker they began to ask for my hand but my mother and brothers did not want me to marry. I, poor thing, loved my mother and didn't understand how mean she was. She didn't love me because she made me work so hard when she had enough money to hire a maid. I took care of my mother, but when I was twenty I was fed up with it and eloped with my *novio*.

593 584 The mother is usually the daughter's chaperone when attending fiestas or when visiting. It is the mother's obligation to guard all grown daughters from having contact with boys. If she fails in this the mother will be subject to the father's anger. Many mothers complain that the necessity to "spy" on their daughters is a heavy burden. A mother who must leave her fifteen-year-old daughter at home with the little ones while she goes to the plaza is anxious over the possibility that the girl will speak to a boy in her absence. If the mother learns that her daughter has a *novio*, it is common for her to beat the girl without the father's knowledge and to keep the matter a secret. Although most mothers are harsh in their treatment of [848] a daughter who becomes pregnant before marriage, they are less so than the fathers and tend to be more forgiving.

593 864 Respect relations between mother and daughter require an avoidance of intimate subjects. Mothers do not customarily prepare their daughters for menstruation or discuss the body or any aspect of sexual relations. And girls do not inform their

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THE ADOLESCENT GIRL

882 Although a girl becomes a *señorita* at fifteen, adolescence may be said to begin at twelve or thirteen. At this age girls are withdrawn from school to stay at home and work with the mother. They are expected to give up friends and habits of play and to devote themselves to caring for younger siblings and doing household chores. Some girls of this age are reluctant to discontinue their former activities and receive a good deal of punishment before they resign themselves to it.

At a girl's fifteenth birthday, her parents prepare her for marriage by presenting her with a pair of shoes for holidays, a bright colored dress and apron, and perhaps a pair of silver or gold earrings. Even very poor parents make an effort to give their daughter new clothing to attract a husband. Girls are very pleased by this and pay much attention to their appearance. They generally look better groomed than either *niñas* or married women. Despite the new clothes and other finery, some girls are 883 reluctant to become *señoritas* because they have even less freedom and are expected to do more work at home. They must now do everything that a married woman does, wash and iron the heavier clothes, as well as the badly soiled ones, sew, grind corn, make larger tortillas, grind coffee, cook all the food eaten by the family, learn to make *mole* and prepare fiesta dishes, and also sometimes go for water. In addition the girls are given almost entire care of their younger brothers and sisters. The girls are held responsible if the children are hurt, become ill, or are naughty. Usually the older girls are permitted to punish their charges lightly and to send them on errands, but they do not have full authority, even when the mother is not at home. In general the elder girls are expected to defer to the younger ones and to be protective and compliant. If a younger brother or sister complains to the mother about the older girl, she may be punished.

The contrast between the girls who stay at home and those who continue going to school is striking. The educated girl usually does very little housework, assisting only with the lighter tasks. She has more leisure time, more friends, and is generally less restricted by her parents. Even if she does no professional work after completion of school, she automatically enjoys a higher status than do her less educated [582] peers. These girls tend to marry late because of the difficulty of finding a suitable husband. Girls who continue to go to school until fifteen years of age or longer are a particular source of apprehension to their parents. As a precaution, and at much expenditure of time and money, girls who attend school out of town are taken to and from school by one of the parents or an elder brother on week-ends or holidays.

After menstruation occurs, the mother becomes more strict in her surveillance of 864 her daughter. The most emphatic restriction and discipline are applied to the ●584 adolescent girl in her relations with boys. She is warned over and over that the worst thing she could do is speak to a boy or pay attention to anything he might say to her. She is told that boys are dangerous and often the cause of disgrace, and that only crazy or "bad" girls have anything to do with them before marriage. Girls are warned not to bring shame to the parents and they are threatened with severe punishment. Girls are so guarded that a delay in returning from an errand may

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be cause for a sharp scolding or slap. Ideally, the girl is not supposed to leave the house unaccompanied, though expediency frequently demands that she does.

The responsibility of guarding the chastity and reputation of one or more daughters of marriageable age is often felt to be a burden by the mother. One mother said that she wished her fifteen-year-old daughter would marry soon because it was inconvenient to "spy" on her all the time.

For most girls, the appearance of the first menses is a traumatic experience. Many fear it signifies that they are no longer virgins, others that they have an internal lesion and will bleed to death. Most girls associate it with something shameful, dirty, and even punishable, and keep it secret from parents and sisters. A very much frightened girl sometimes seeks reassurance by confiding in her grandmother or in a friend. Girls who are still in school at an age when there is interest in such matters generally learn some of the facts of menstruation from other girls. There is a tendency for more educated girls to feel less guilt and be less secretive about menstruation both in school and at home, but almost all girls express shame and disgust in connection with it.

When girls married before puberty, it was widely believed that menstruation was caused by sexual intercourse. When marriages began to take place after puberty, this belief broke down and is no longer held by most people, but it still persists among some. For example, an uncle, who accidentally became aware that his fifteen year-old niece was menstruating, denounced the girl as not being a virgin and scolded her mother for not guarding her.

The grandmother, or the mother when she learns of it, gives the girl advice on proper care during menstruation. Most warn against bathing or washing the feet or eating "cold" foods, such as pork, avocado, beans, and lemon, since these are believed to stop the flow. Menstruation is expected to last three days, and the flow is generally sparse, requiring only the wearing of an extra pair of underdrawers. If the flow is longer than three or four days, there is some concern over it, and herb medicines are usually taken.

The adjustment of the adolescent girl to her situation at home varies considerably. In large part it depends upon the girl's relations with the mother, since it is with her that there is most contact. The close relationship of the adolescent girl with her mother is recent in Tepoztlán, for child marriage and patrilocal residence in past years effectively severed the mother-daughter tie. The young daughter in law was looked upon as the main source of assistance for the mother. Now it is the grown daughter who partially fills this role. Her work is obligatory, "Why then do we rear children except to help us?" The mother of a grown girl is considered fortunate because "now she has someone to work for her."

Many of the attitudes of the mother-in-law toward the daughter in law have been carried over to the daughter. There is a tendency for mothers to "retire" from most of the heavy household duties and to shift the major burden of the household upon the daughters, assuming the role of director rather than partner. Many mothers are critical, demanding, and querulous with their daughters and scold

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COURTSHIP

Courtship before marriage is relatively new in Tepoztlán. Before the Revolution most marriages were arranged by the parents, with or without the consent of the children. Girls married at a very early age, leaving little opportunity for courtship. From the life stories of informants now in their fifties, we learn that in some cases young people did not know each other before marriage and met for the first time at the wedding ceremony in the church. Parents frequently had to threaten their young daughters with physical punishment to get them to consent to the marriage. The following excerpt from the life story of a woman, now a widow of sixty is quite typical:

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I was eleven years old when a boy came from Gabriel Mariaca to ask for my hand. He came with his parents and a jar of silver money. But my grandmother became angry and told them I was still a child, and she didn't want to see me going about carrying babies yet. When I was twelve my mother took me home again. Then a boy of sixteen came to ask for me, and my mother said yes. She told me that she wanted me to marry before something bad happened to me. I did not want to marry, especially because I did not know who the boy was. My mother said that if I did not say yes to the priest in the church she would throw me down from the top of the church. I was afraid and did what my mother told me.

Often young people knew each other, at least by sight, but contacts were few, brief, and secretive. Being *novios* at that time meant only that the parents had made arrangements for the marriage, and the date had been set. *Novios* were not permitted to be alone together at any time before marriage. In a few better-to-do and literate families, *novios* would court secretly by exchanging love letters.

Today courtship before marriage is common. Parents lament the changing of the old ways and are concerned over the fact that boys and girls have many opportunities to become acquainted with one another, particularly at school. Indeed, it is unusual for a girl over thirteen or a boy over fifteen not to have a *novio*. The local priest has recognized this and has stated in doctrinal classes that having a *novio* is not a sin, and the girls need no longer mention it at confession. But, he added, it is a sin to be *novios* for more than six months before marriage. It is common for girls to have an initial sense of guilt in accepting their first *novio*, but this is only a fleeting reaction, and girls are much more conscious of fear than guilt.

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There is much secrecy surrounding courtship. A girl who is found to have a *novio* is severely punished by her parents. She may be beaten, denied food, not given new clothing, and not permitted to leave the house alone for a long time thereafter. There is a great readiness among the older generation, particularly among relatives, to inform a girl's parents if they see her talking or walking with a boy, and *novios* take extra precautions not to be seen by them.

Courtship is usually initiated by the boy. Fear of refusal is very strong, and he plans his conquest carefully and proceeds slowly. The timidity of boys in approaching a girl for the first time is the subject of much joking among girls. Drinking to

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Drinking to
584 bolster up their courage is common among boys setting out to court a girl. A boy
[273] may admire a girl from a distance for several weeks or months without declaring
[195] himself, or he will try to get her attention by staring hard at her (*echar el ojo castigado*).[3] (See Fig. 59.) If she notices it and smiles, he is encouraged to proceed
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Fig. 59. A Tepoztecan boy trying to get a girl's attention by staring at her.

with the courting. Some few do not approach a girl themselves but do so through
[273] a go-between. Boys whose attentions are refused have been known to get drunk for days because of the humiliation. Occasionally a boy who is spurned will revenge himself by attacking the girl with the help of friends. A boy who has received encouragement from a girl in the form of smiles and direct glances and is subsequently rejected by her is especially outraged and feels justified in forcing himself upon her. Girls do not experience the tension and fear of rejection involved in initiating courtship, but they do fear revenge and must be very guarded in their manner with boys. The occasional girl who smiles directly at a boy, or gives him meaningful glances, has almost always set her heart upon him and is quite ready to accept him as a *novio*. Encouragement as open as this is usually successful, for it is a rare boy or man in Tepoztlán who would resist an easy conquest.

The first step in courting is to send the girl a letter declaring love. Occasionally, before writing, a youth may approach a girl in the street and detain her (*atajarla*)

[3] Other expressions used to describe a boy's flirting are *echar vidrio* and *están dandole un gallo la noria*.

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and say, "*Señorita*, may I accompany you for a moment?" If the girl consents, he will at once propose that they be *novios*, and he then will begin to send her love letters. This approach is recent and is limited to those with more education or contact with the outside, or to those with courage enough to face a possible refusal or scolding from the girl. The writing of love letters is no longer limited to a few but has become widespread with increasing literacy. Young people who are unable to write well ask a friend with more education to do it for them. Girls and boys who have been to secondary school are particularly sought out as letter writers, and they derive a great deal of prestige in this way. The letters are written in flowery style and are usually copied out of a book of etiquette. A typical letter is the following:

Adored Señorita:

The impulses of my heart are such that they encourage even the most cautious man to commit indiscretion which sooner or later he will regret. Perhaps this will not happen to me in taking the liberty of writing this letter. My feelings are such that I am taking the liberty in order to ascertain my coming fate, pending the day when you honor me with your affirmative or negative response.

My soul is carried to the extreme in manifesting in exaggerated phrases, which are lacking in substance and sound, the love that you inspire. But do not think that because of this I do not feel a true passion for your incomparable beauty and goodness. The proof is that, despite the fear that my petition will be denied, I tremulously write this declaration and anxiously await the result, hoping that my love will be requited.

Favor me, Señorita, and attend my entreaty; and if, unutterable words, you feel a little sympathy toward one so audacious as to love you tenderly, communicate with me quickly and in all sincerity.

With all the sentiment which invades the heart of your respectful and constant adorer

Your devoted servant,

A boy may send two or three such letters anonymously before he has the courage to affix his name. If a favorable reply is received, the boy arranges for a meeting. Any answer but an outright refusal is taken to be favorable; when a girl asks for time to think it over, a boy considers her his *novia*. It is a common sight to see a young boy loitering at a street corner for hours, waiting for an opportunity to get a glimpse of his *novia* or to say a few words to her. (See Fig. 60.) This "cornering" a girl (*esquiniar la muchacha*) is a regular courting practice in Tepoztlán. At night boys often gather at a corner to play the guitar and serenade a nearby *novia* of one of the group. A typical song is as follows:

I come to greet you
With this serenade of love.
May you have no trouble,
My charming angel.

Your laughter or your fear
Will tell me of your feelings.
I am your faithful lover
And adore you always.

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[539]

There are enough flowers in my heart
To make a bouquet for you.
I shall be happy and you will have no trouble
When you enjoy my love.

Novios continue to write letters to one another because of the difficulty of getting together. There is, of course, much secrecy involved in the sending of letters. Many *novios* have a secret place to leave letters, or they may be delivered [202] [589] by a trusted friend or by a child hired for the purpose. Sometimes *novios* deliver letters to one another in passing. Some widows and girls are known to hire themselves for the purpose of delivering messages for lovers, to patch up quarrels, or

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[516]

Fig. 60. A boy waiting hopefully at the plaza for a glimpse of his *novia*.

[202] [589] [195] to convince a girl to become someone's *novia*. These women are known as *alcahuetes*. Another term for them is *corre-ve-y-dile* (run-see-and-tell). Both of these are insulting terms, and such go-betweens are strongly disapproved of; they are also suspected of knowing sorcery especially appropriate for *novios*.

Meetings between *novios* may take place at the fountain (Fig. 61), in the corral of the girl's house after dark, or in a deserted spot in the daytime, always with much apprehension about being discovered. If they are *novios* for the first time, acquaintanceship generally develops slowly. *Novios* generally caress and embrace [832] but rarely kiss. Kissing is a modern innovation in courtship, and only the more sophisticated *novios* do so. Kissing is traditionally associated with religious worship,

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Fig. 61. Courtship at the fountain.

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kissing the saints and kissing the priest's hands. One girl, when asked whether she [832]
ever kissed her *novio*, said, "What, is he a saint that I should kiss him?" Sexual [836]
relations between *novios* occurs frequently but not, as believed by parents, in
evitably. Among young people who are *novios* for the first time, sexual relations
may not occur until after one or even two years, or the pair may eventually separate
over the question. Among more mature *novios*, platonic relations are a rarity.
Ideally, both the boy and the girl are expected to be virgins at marriage, but it is
safe to say that most boys and some girls have sexual relations before marriage.

Young boys and girls often seek out older companions to learn from them the
art of courtship. Girls at school and in the Juventud Católica discuss their *novios*, [522]
read each others' love letters, tell of experiences, and even tell off-color jokes and
stories. Boys entering their teens loiter among older boys at every opportunity.
The following excerpt from the story of one of our informants (now age forty) is a
typical experience:

> When I was about fourteen, I managed to join up with some boys of eighteen and twenty. They began to say, "How many *novias* have you?" I answered, "None." "How stupid! Haven't you noticed the girl nearby who likes you?" They began to teach me how to speak to *novias*.
>
> Once a girl of about seventeen who lived near my house said to me, "I see you go out a

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584 lot." I answered, "No." "Well," she said, "if I were a man I would have three *novias* at a time." "But I can't support a woman," I answered. "Well, let her support you," she said. I consulted my friends and told them of the conversation. They urged me on. Once I got up enough courage to tell the girl I loved her. I already had sexual desires, but I didn't know how to act or talk. I don't recall the year, but it was in 1915 or 1916 when one day in June I told her I liked her. On the day before the barrio fiesta, on August 5, she said to me, "Where have you been that I haven't seen you?" I asked to meet her and said I wanted to talk to her. She agreed to meet me that night. I threw little stones in the darkness to tell her I could come out. She told me to meet her behind the house. The night was pitch black, and there was a little drizzle. I began to make little noises to tell her where I was. I moved the little twigs. When she arrived I got the chills. She stopped about three feet in front of me and said, "Well, here I am, what did you want to talk about?" I didn't know what to say so I said, "Do you or don't you want to marry me?" "But I am older than you, perhaps your folks won't want you to." We were about two feet apart. "Come closer," I said, and I grabbed her and drew her under my serape. And then I got more chills. "What's the matter with you?" she said. "Do you have malaria?" Finally, I said, "Let us lie down here." She said no, and I said yes. It was yes, no, yes, no, until finally at about 3:00 A.M. we heard the *chirimía,* and since her father was to get up soon, she left and nothing happened. The next day, I saw her and she laughed at me. I told my friends what happened. They called me a fool and said, "Why did you just talk and talk instead of grab her and throw her down?" I never got beyond the *novio* stage. I never really got her. She had a serious lover who wanted to marry her. Once he asked me not to continue talking to her, and he threatened me. He was twenty, and I was fifteen, and I was very thin. Soon after that I bought a knife and always carried it with me for protection.

Being *novios* does not always mean that a boy and girl will marry. In the past, when a girl accepted a *novio* she usually expected him to become her husband. Today it is common to have several *novios* before marriage, and some girls and boys have several *novios* simultaneously, a practice which is considered dishonorable. A girl who has many *novios* is called *loca,* and a boy who has many *novias* is called *muy enamorado.* Boys often court girls for the purpose of having sexual relations and then abandon them.

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832 584 Many young men resort to love magic when they have difficulty in courting a girl. The most common procedure is to use a powder made of crushed human skull bones. This powder is to be placed in the girl's right hand, in her hair, or in a sweet drink. Once this is done, it is believed the girl will begin to love the boy and miss him. Some men in Tepoztlán, and in other parts of Mexico, believe that the leg of a beetle placed in a girl's soda drink will get her very *loca* and make her desire sexual relations. Care is taken not to use too large a dose. The following story was told to illustrate what can happen when an overdose is given.

A youth of twenty-four liked a girl very much and decided to "corner" her and speak to her, but she insulted him. This happened three times. He still wanted her. A friend advised him to get some magical skull powder and put it into a drink for her. He did this but gave her too large a dose. Then the girl began to feel so much desire for him that

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she went to his house alone. The boy's parents refused to let her stay, and she became *loca* and a street woman. The authorities jailed her. Later a man took pity on her, married her, and "cured" her.

The use of sorcery for revenge is very much feared by those who have jilted or humiliated a *novio*. Young women are believed to take the picture of the former lover and stick pins in the head or breast or other part of his body, depending upon where she wishes to harm him. Often chronic illnesses in young men are attributed to some girl's black magic.

MARRIAGE

The traditional and most respectable form of arranging a marriage is the *petición de mano*, or asking for the hand of the girl.[3] This is done by the boy's father and his godfather of baptism. If the boy's father is dead, the mother may act as substitute; if the boy is an orphan, his godfather may go alone or with one of the boy's relatives, preferably the uncle. Formerly the parents chose a wife for their son and generally asked for his approval. Nowadays the procedure is reversed, with the boy indicating the desired girl to his father, and asking him to make the formal request for her hand. Most often the boy and girl are *novios* secretly before they inform their parents of a desire to marry. If so, the girl may ascertain her parents' attitude toward the marriage before a formal request is made. Sometimes the boy may first write a formal proposal of marriage to the girl's parents and only after getting a favorable reply will he ask his father to begin negotiations. When the boy's father and godfather appear at the girl's home, her parents, even though they plan to accept the offer, ask for a stay of a few weeks (*pedir un plazo*), as a matter of form, and the men are asked to return at the end of that time.

In cases where the boy and girl are not *novios* and where the matter was not prearranged, there is the humiliating possibility of the marriage request being refused. But, to avoid offending, direct refusals are rarely made. Various excuses may be given, and a long stay may be requested to consider the matter. A request for a stay of one year is generally taken to mean a negative reply, and few

[3] The only account of marriage customs which I have been able to locate in the historical documents dealing with Tepoztlán is found in the *Relación*, pp. 241-42, and is presumably a description of pre-Hispanic customs, as told to the Spanish officials by the natives. This account, though sketchy, suggests the existence of class differences in marriage customs and suggests patrilocal residence. It also reveals an example of the underlying similarity between native symbolism and Catholic ritual in parts of the marriage ceremony. The pertinent excerpt is as follows: ". . . and thus when a nobleman married he sent for the woman who was carried on a litter decorated with arches of flowers at midday; if she were from the upper class; but in the case of the daughter of a commoner, she was carried on the back [of someone] and they carried before her a burning torch of pine, one for her and one for her betrothed, and upon arriving at the house of the betrothed they took her into a small room, where there was a stone of the kind upon which they place the *olla* [for heating] and they commanded her to give them something as a sign that she was mistress of the house, and this done they allowed them to be there for four days, without one going to the other, and finally they took them out and washed them and dressed them and made a knot with the stuff of his garment and her *huipil*, and when this knot was made the marriage was completed. . . ."

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584 Tepoztecan boys will wait that long. If the decision is favorable, the girl's parents may question the boy about his willingness to undertake the obligation of supporting a wife, and they may warn him that their daughter is young and inexperienced. They suggest that if he is unwilling to endure the girl's faults this is the time to say so, and the entire matter will be dropped. The boy is also warned that he must not blame his wife's parents or abandon his wife if he is dissatisfied with her after the marriage. At the same time the girl is advised that her life will be very different in the home of her husband and his parents. She is told that she must change her character and her ways. She must try to please her husband and his parents and work hard. She must learn to obey them and always ask her husband's permission to leave the house. She is warned not to be jealous or to heed gossip about her husband's affairs. If both the boy and girl agree to this, a date for the marriage is set.

583 One of the underlying principles in marriage arrangements in the past was the compensation of the bride's family for the loss of a working member. There was a formal bride price known as the *chichitomin*, which means payment for the mother's milk, that is, the milk used in raising the child. The *chichitomin* was paid in silver pesos, and the price varied from a few pesos to twenty-five or thirty. Many old people in the village still remember the payment of the bride price. It was also customary for the young man to bring wood and carry water for his future in-laws for a period of one or two years. In addition there was the custom known as the [584] *puesto de flores*, whereby the boy's mother had to bring flowers and candles for the *santo* of the girl every eight days for a month before the marriage. The boy's parents were also expected to bring gifts of chocolate, bread, and wine each Sunday from the time of the *petición de mano* until the date of the marriage. Today the *puesto de flores* is rarely practiced, and no one now works for the father-in-law. [584] But the boy's mother is still expected to bring gifts during the interval of the marriage negotiations.

When either set of parents refuses to give permission for the marriage, or if the couple have reason to believe that their parents will object in any way, the boy and girl will usually elope. Sometimes if a couple is seen together they will elope immediately, rather than have the girl punished by her parents. Elopements, which are known as *raptos*, consist of going away together and living as man and wife for a few days in the home of a well-disposed aunt or uncle or friend of the boy. Sometimes the boy brings the girl to his own home directly, or after a day or two. The girl is kept hidden until her parents stop looking for her, then the boy's father and godfather may visit the girl's parents and ask for their permission for the marriage. The elopement in most cases is for the purpose of breaking down resistance to the marriage, and often the girl's parents will accept it as a *fait accompli* and will agree to the marriage, in which case they may take the girl home and go through the proper procedure. But the girl's parents frequently remain angry and will not speak to either the boy or the girl for several years. If they get married, the parents may refuse to attend the marriage. In some cases the girl's parents may